

Hood Canal Bridge Project Closure Mitigation Plan: September 2006

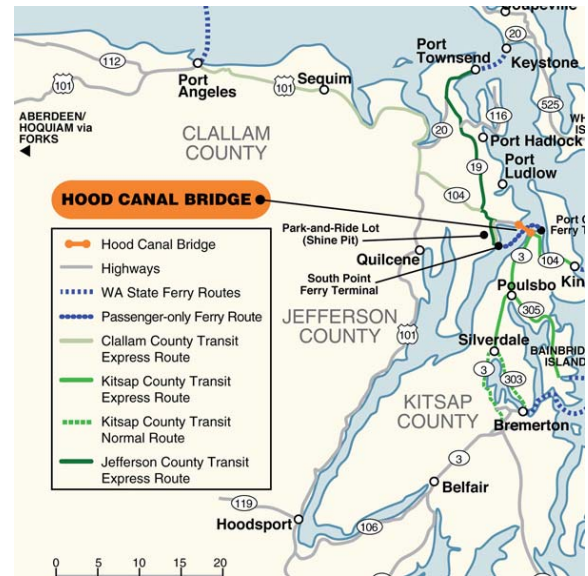
Briefing paper

What is the Purpose?

The purpose of the \$10 million closure mitigation plan is to keep traffic moving to and from the Olympic Peninsula during the May-June 2009 Hood Canal Bridge closure. This is a good plan that has been developed over the past eight years. It incorporates the things the Olympic and Kitsap community expressed they need to survive the closure. The plan specifically addresses drivers' top concerns voiced in the 2003 Hood Canal Bridge User Survey: getting to their destination on time; knowing the fastest routes; avoiding being stuck in traffic; and, getting help to make their travel easier.

Plan Details

The plan includes: making improvements and adding traffic control on alternate driving routes such as US 101 and SR 3; providing transportation options, including a water shuttle across Hood Canal and transit connections; implementing additional rideshare opportunities; offering assistance to get to medical appointments, and communicating the closure details through a public outreach program.



What has been accomplished so far?

- **1997:** Early planners recommended \$10 million be set aside to address affect on drivers
- **1998:** Origin and Destination Study was completed that identified bridge users purpose for using the bridge
- **1999:** A stakeholders committee and advisory committee evaluated 62 HCB closure mitigation options for effectiveness by looking at travel time, cost to implement, capacity, long-term benefits, environmental impacts, rideshare effectiveness, economic impact to community, economic impact to individual users, cost per person served per day and cost per vehicle served per day. Committees recommend 11 preferred closure mitigation options for further analysis and refinement.
- **2000:** Pre-design work planning moved forward by encouraging every team member, sponsor, and stakeholder to help identify pitfalls before they affected the project work plan.
- **2001:** Peninsula Regional Transportation and Planning Organization (PRTPO) Executive Council reviewed preferred options, preliminary design & cost estimates and plan development (type, size and location).
- **2002:** Project management team, stakeholders committee and advisory committee combined, formed a task force and determined the water shuttle across Hood Canal best benefited the greatest number of bridge users. PRTPO Executive Council approved final strategies recommended by the project committee. Federal Highway Administration noted that only "temporary" facilities and services are eligible for federal funding.
- **2003:** Work began on design, land leases were secured and South Point landing property purchased.
- **2005:** Data was collected data during two two-day closures and a report published detailing traffic patterns during August closures and revised 2009 traffic pattern predictions.
- **2006:** New Hood Canal Bridge design team reviewed past closure mitigation materials, restarted design work, PRTPO Committee Chairs reviewed closure mitigation commitment plan and said "Let's get going, keep us informed and manage to the budget" and PRTPO Executive and Policy Board reaffirmed the plan.

Plan Elements

Alternate Driving Routes Improvements and Traffic Control

- 1) Temporary improvements to state highway locations that will experience increased traffic during the closure.
- 2) Implementation of the incident management plan, including use of Incident Response Trucks, maintenance trucks, Washington State Patrol patrols, signage at key decision points, highway advisory radio, variable message signs and radio alerts to assist drivers.

Transportation Options

- 1) A water shuttle service across Hood Canal, between South Point in Jefferson County and Port Gamble in Kitsap County.
- 2) Ferry terminals and parking for the water shuttle service.
- 3) Transit service from the water shuttle terminals.

Rideshare Opportunities

- 1) Assistance with finding rideshare opportunities prior to and during the closure by utilizing the existing Puget Sound Rideshare database system.
- 2) Implementation of the public outreach plan, including informational posters, e-mail rider alerts, Web site pages and brochures.

Medical Transportation Assistance

- 1) A reservation-based transport service from Port Gamble to Seattle, Bremerton and Poulsbo for people who have medical appointments in those areas.
- 2) Community outreach with Emergency Medical Services groups to facilitate region-wide planning and driver preparedness.

Public Outreach

- 1) Community outreach tactics such as newspaper and radio ads, brochures, posters, direct-mail postcards and community presentations.
- 2) Distribution of information through tourism and business interests, local community groups and the Peninsula Regional Transportation Planning Organization.
- 3) An aggressive media relations campaign featuring closure information.

Benefits to Drivers

The closure mitigation plan's value during and after the closure lies in its ability to provide the community surrounding the Hood Canal Bridge these important benefits:

- **A new bridge:** A bridge that is wider, safer and more affordable to maintain.
- **Short closure time (non-peak tourist season):** The project team's goal is to complete the work in six weeks.
- **Transportation options for all types of bridge users:** The plan provides travel options for bridge users for recreation, personal trips, for getting to work, for business trips, to get to the doctor and to transport goods.

Who supports the project?

- Peninsula Regional Transportation and Planning Organization

What is the schedule?

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| 1) Complete updated closure mitigation budget | December 2006 |
| 2) Complete facility design for water shuttle terminals | December 2007 |
| 3) Complete in-water work at facilities | August 2008 |
| 4) Begin public outreach campaign | December 2008 |
| 5) Complete plan elements | April 2009 |
| 6) Operate facilities | May-June 2009 |

What are the consequences of changing the program now?

Funds have already been invested in the project and additional project delays could mean extensive cost increases. Delay in implementing the project could result in failure to complete the project before the 2009 closure.

Who do I contact for more information?

Becky Hixson, *Hood Canal Bridge Communication Manager (253) 305-6450*

Eric Soderquist, *Hood Canal Bridge Project Director (253) 305-6400*

Randy Hain, *Olympic Region Administrator (360) 357-2605*